



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Statement of Chairman Bennie G. Thompson

Markup: H.R. 1333, H.R. 2631, H.R. 4179, H.R. 4749, H.R. 5909, H.R. 5982, and H. Res. 1150

May 20, 2008 (Washington) – Today, Committee on Homeland Security Chairman Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) delivered the following prepared remarks for the full Committee markup for the following bills: H.R. 1333, H.R. 2631, H.R. 4179, H.R. 4749, H.R. 5909, H.R. 5982, and H. Res. 1150:

“When Speaker Pelosi ‘gaveled-in’ the 110th Congress, a new chapter in homeland security was opened. The enactment of H.R. 1, the ‘Implementing 9/11 Commission Recommendations Act,’ was a major milestone for this Congress and the Nation. Congress took the lead in making America more secure.

Specifically, this comprehensive measure---

- set a 100% standard for screening air cargo and U.S.-bound seaborne containers;
- established a stand-alone interoperability grant program at DHS;
- ensures homeland security grants are allocated primarily on the basis of risk;
- authorizes more than \$4 billion over five years for mass transit, over-the-road buses, and rail security grants; and
- strengthens information-sharing between the Federal government and local law enforcement.

That legislative process was about enhancing homeland security. The authorization process is about enhancing the performance and capabilities of DHS. On that, this Committee has also had some success.

In fact, last year, we came together on H.R. 1684, an authorization bill that gives DHS sorely-needed resources, accountability, and oversight. This bipartisan bill was approved by the House last May. It has a number of critical provisions that need to be enacted into law to give DHS the capacity and resources to become the Federal agency that the American people deserve. Regrettably, to date, no action has been taken by the Senate on H.R. 1684. So, this year, we are trying something different, in the hopes of making progress.

This year, we are moving discrete bills that allow us to drill down in specific areas and create authorizations based on the Committee’s oversight work. The bills that we are considering today will do everything from providing redress to Americans misidentified against terror watch lists to enhancing DHS’ capability to address the threat of improvised-explosive devices to ensuring the integrity of aviation security covert tests.

To ensure that we consider a wide array of bills today, I exercised my authority under Committee Rule ten and discharged four bills from the relevant Subcommittee that were adopted but were not formally forwarded to the Full Committee.

There will be many other bills that this Committee plans to move in the days to come but for today, I look forward to moving these measures in a bipartisan way.”

#

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Please contact Dena Graziano or Adam Comis at 202-225-9978

